



Montgomery County Council

From the Office of Councilmember Nancy Navarro

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Montgomery County Council Approves 'Kids Ride Free' on Local Buses for FY12

*Councilmember Nancy Navarro Led Effort to Reinstate
Program to Allow Free Passage on Weekday Afternoons*

ROCKVILLE, Md., May 23, 2011—The Montgomery County Council on May 19 approved the reinstatement of the “Kids Ride Free” program in the Fiscal Year 2012 operating budget that will allow students to use Metrobus and the County’s Ride On bus service within Montgomery County for free on weekdays between 2 and 7 p.m. The Kids Ride Free program had been suspended in the FY11 operating budget.

Councilmember Nancy Navarro made reinstatement of the program one of her top priorities as the Council worked toward reaching a budget agreement. The Council will formally adopt the budget, which will include funding for Kids Ride Free, on Thursday, May 26.

Councilmember Navarro, who represents District 4 (East County), said it became evident to her that reestablishment of the program needed to be a priority after hearing from many students in her district and around the County regarding the program’s importance.

“I am thrilled I received the support of my colleagues for the reinstatement of Kids Ride Free,” said Councilmember Navarro. “Over the past year, many young people have expressed their disappointment about our decision to cut this critical program.”

(MORE)

While the County continues to offer “Youth Cruiser” passes at the low cost of \$11 a month and \$18 for the summer, those passes are valid only on Ride On—which operates only within the County. Approximately 30 percent of County ridership is on Metrobus, and that percentage is higher in east Montgomery County. Kids Ride Free gives students the flexibility to use both Ride On and Metrobus during the critical after-school hours.

“For thousands of students who don’t have cars and aren’t eligible for MCPS transportation, bus service is essential, and many of these students have difficulty affording Metrobus and Ride On rates,” said Councilmember Navarro. “Hopefully, the kids who take advantage of this program will become life-long transit users.”

The FY12 budget includes \$376,000 for the Kids Ride Free program, including \$276,000 in lost Ride On revenue and \$100,000 in reimbursement costs to WMATA.

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